

Researcher: David Stevenson

Tape 52, Side 2 and
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Interviewed: January 29, 1976

James Point (Assisted by Delbert Guerin)
4064 Thel-lai-whol-ton Drive,
Musqueam Indian Reserve,
Vancouver, B. C.

- He went to an Indian Industrial School on Cooper Island to learn a trade; half a day, he didn't know how to speak English, just his Indian Language. Learned English, didn't learn much the first year, he was only 8 years old, then he began to learn.
- At first, sisters taught, afterwards inspectors came and they were given an examination.
- When asked he said he wanted to be a shoemaker, so he learned the trade, but he could not find work in Vancouver and he didn't really like the trade, so he went fishing with his father.
- Father used a skiff, then they brought round-bottomed Columbia River sail boats.
- Fished with his father 10 years, only one cannery then in Steveston.
- The man's name was English who managed it.
- Then they started building canneries all over.
- He remembers J. H. Todd & Sons.
- The fishermen didn't get paid much then, 12½¢ for a sockeye.
- Good money now in fishing.
- His boat went down in the Gulf in a storm and he lost half a boat load of sockeye.
- Fishing with sail boat was hard work.
- At Rivers Inlet they didn't allow gas boats at first because the noise scared the fish.
- Everybody fished from the village, at first there wasn't much fishing done on the North Arm but at Steveston, Canoe Pass and the South Arm, up the Fraser to St. Mary's.
- Gas engines appeared up ~~there~~ the river first before down here.
- Nets were used as soon as the canneries started up.
- Nets were made by hand, most were 5¼" mesh, size of mesh varied with the fish you were catching.
- Before they made nets the Indians used to use poles. They used to go out, two in a canoe, at low water, one would stand in the

- bow, hold the pole down until he hit a sturgeon. Spear had 2 or 3 prongs. The prong had a rope made of sea-lion guts, they pulled the pole and the prongs went in and stayed and then the sturgeon went until all the line was played out. Then it was hit with a club made from the crab-apple tree. (he didn't see any of that).
- It was before his time, but he saw the poles of different lengths, they were made mostly of fir, some in yellow cedar. (He explains with his hands how the prongs were attached to the pole).
 - No one was allowed to touch or jump over the poles as it brought bad luck.
 - Mr. Point feels he should be paid informant's fees.
 - His stories have been collected before and he was paid.
 - He talks of memorial posts for graves which showed the kind of person you were, most of them are now in New York or elsewhere.
 - The river was called "stautlo" which means river he gives the Indian names for the various Indian fishing camps, and parts of the river.
 - He tells the story of a early people who spoke a little bit different from the others and were therefore, socially ostracized.
 - He talks about fishing with his father who was quite strong. His father used to be able to outrow two Japanese in one boat; this was around the turn of the century.
 - Some of Musqueam people were living at Gary Point.
 - There was a reserve at Patullo Bridge of 104 acres.
 - Mr. Point was born 1881.
 - Fish traps were used by the Musqueam, after the White people came, stakes were placed on the flats, just at the drop off, 3 or 4 were in the Middle Arm.
 - Fishermen used to rip their nets on them.
 - Eulachons were fished by the Musqueam: there were lots of them, two men in a canoe, one with a fork would scoop them into the canoe.
 - There was little trading with people up the coast as food and other necessities were in plentiful supply.
 - Lots of deer around the present University grounds.
 - His father fished commercially before he went to school.

- Those people never went to the main river to fish.
- Vancouver cannery was one of the first, so was Terra Nova, built same time as English's as well as Ewen's at Ewens Slough.
- Also there was one way up at Port Mann.
- He knows some bad stories: murder stories at Port Mann Cannery.
(tape runs out)
- Indians gillnetted before Whites, acted as pioneers in this fishing industry.
- Fish were dried by sun up high on a pole, two sockeyes were dried together and thrown up with long pole: often he tried it and it landed on his head.
- They all had their own poles.
- Sun dried made a different taste from smoke dried.
- People further up the Fraser Canyon still sun dry their salmon.
- Vancouver cannery used to smoke fish.
- Delbert's grandfather, Mr. Guerin, was head smoker, used hardwood sawdust.
- Mr. Point started gillnetting early 1900's.
- Left school in 1890.
- Has had 3 brothers: Abraham, Dominic and Alec. 2 sisters: Cecilia and Lizzy. His mother had sisters who lived in Graham Island in the States whom he never met.
- Big reserve in a place called "Serita" further out towards the ocean----"Uchuluk" people"-----.